

Kristen L. Atha  
Director

November 2, 2023

James Peltier, PE  
Director of Private Development  
E.P. Ferris & Associates, Inc.  
2130 Quarry Trails Drive, 2nd Floor  
Columbus, Oh 43228

RE: Stormwater Drainage Manual (SWDM) Type II Variance Request – Columbus Works Commerce Center

Mr. Peltier:

This letter is in response to the subject variance request Type II (Non-Stream) to the 2022 SWDM Section 3 *Stormwater Control Practices*. More specifically, exemption is being sought from the SWDM Section 3.4.1 requirement that “Peak water surface elevation during the 100-year design event must be 1 foot below the basin embankment elevation and the first floor elevations of building structures near the basin”, and Section 2.4 *Design of Major Stormwater Routing Systems* requirement that “The major storm routing path shall be designed such that the peak flood stage during the 100-year design storm is at least one foot below the first floor elevation of the building structures within and adjacent to the development”.

The Columbus Works Commerce Center is a project consisting of five separate residential, commercial and industrial developments on five parcels that are to be split from an existing 77-acre parcel located at 6200 E. Broad St. Additionally, the development will include two public roadways extending through the development. Five separate detention basins are proposed as part of the stormwater management. Two of the proposed basins are in close proximity to the existing Mount Carmel Health System-owned building at 6150 E. Broad St. The variance application is to allow these basins to be exempt from the above SWDM requirements.

The SWDM variance application was submitted to the City on June 27, 2023. As part of the Variance review process, the subject Variance request was posted on the City website on June 28, 2023 to solicit public comments. No public comments were received by the posted due date. The Variance Review Committee has met and reviewed the subject variance application on July 12, 2023.

The submitted Variance Request was found by the Variance Review Committee to be in compliance with the SWDM Type II Non-Stream Protection Variance application requirements.

Three alternatives were considered within the application - Full Compliance, Minimal Impact and the Preferred Alternative.



- Full Compliance Alternative – The proposed basins would need to be placed 20.5 ft. below the surrounding grade, with embankment grades at up to 1:1 slopes to be able to meet the surrounding grades without encroaching far into the proposed development. Additionally, the basins would be significantly below the normal groundwater levels in the area. Due to significant safety and constructability concerns this Alternative was found to be not practical.
- Minimal Impact Alternative – The proposed basins would need to be moved farther north away from the existing building. Such change to the site layout would have a detrimental impact on the development’s functionality, and would also result in a major impact to the project’s schedule and financial viability. Due to these factors, this alternative was also found to be unfeasible. This alternative would remain non-compliant with the SWDM for the same reasons explained above.
- Preferred Alternative –the proposed basins, while having their 100-year ponding levels above the lowest finished floor elevation of the building, would be SWDM-compliant regarding the finished floor elevation of the northern part of the building, directly facing the basins. Flood routing conditions of the site would be improved vs. the existing conditions. Additionally, the applicant suggested that the existing building is slated to be demolished in the near future to make way for the proposed redevelopment of the site.

Upon reviewing and discussing the application, the Variance Review Committee agreed with the applicant that the Preferred Alternative is reasonable given the current conditions and site limitations. The Committee further agreed with the applicant’s argument that the Full Compliance and Minimal Impact Alternatives would result in significant hardship for the project owner.

The Variance Review Committee asked for, and subsequently received a letter from the existing building owner confirming that they have no objections against the proposed Type II variance.

In light of the above, the subject Variance Request, Preferred Alternative is conditionally approved contingent upon the following stipulations:

- Storm CC and E plans, as applicable, and Stormwater Management Report reflecting the subject conditionally approved variance, Preferred Alternative must be submitted and approved by the City of Columbus.

No approval contained herein relieves or absolves the applicant of any provisions of applicable state or federal laws. Please contact PR/SRM Section Manager Greg Fedner, P.E. at 614-645-8072 with any questions.

Sincerely,



Robert S. Priestas, P.E., Administrator  
Division of Sewerage and Drainage

ec: Variance Review Committee  
File

